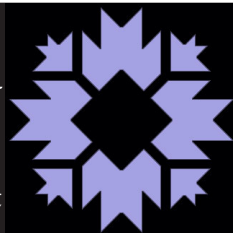


The Planning Post

The Newsletter of the City of Bloomington Planning Department



City of Bloomington Planning Department

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New on the Web

All City Planning documents can now be viewed or downloaded from one convenient web page:

www.bloomington.in.gov/clearinghouse

Neighborhood Update

Green Acres Plan is Complete

The Green Acres neighborhood recently completed its Neighborhood Plan. A celebration was held on May 12 to officially release the document. The plan is a wonderful example of how residents can work together to create a common vision for their neighborhood. The plan can be viewed online at:

www.bloomington.in.gov/clearinghouse
(under the Neighborhood Planning section)

Upcoming Meeting Dates

06/14/07: Board of Zoning Appeals

06/20/07: MPO Citizens Advisory

07/09/07: Plan Commission

07/19/07: Board of Zoning Appeals

08/06/07: MPO Citizens Advisory

08/10/07: MPO Tech. Advisory

08/16/07: Board of Zoning Appeals

08/22/07: MPO Citizens Advisory



New Urbanism in Bloomington

An increasing number of development projects across the country are referred to as “new urbanist” developments. The New Urbanism movement has become so widespread that it is no longer found only in larger metropolitan regions, and is no longer discussed only by developers and city planners, but has captured the interest of everyone who is concerned with development trends in their community.

New Urbanism began as a reaction against sprawl development, and strives to set a new standard for American urban design. The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), the movement’s founding organization, advocates public policy and development practices that support the restoration of existing urban centers and towns, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into real neighborhoods and communities, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy.

Although many developers, planners and environmentalists support New Urbanism, it has not been without criticism. A common complaint of projects that are touted as new urbanist is that they are often large-scale projects that are built too far away from existing city centers, and are therefore not well integrated with the existing city. When built in isolation, these developments often do not achieve the new urbanist goal of enhancing existing urban centers and pedestrian amenities. However, according to a recent survey conducted by *New Urban News*, smaller, neighborhood-scale new urbanist projects are on the rise. Bloomington fits this trend in that it has several new neighborhood-scale developments that fit the principles of New Urbanism.

The new building on the northwest corner of Grimes Lane and South Walnut Street, home of Bloomington Paint and Wallpaper, boasts a building-forward design and is configured with parking in the back, which results in a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. McDoel Market and Deli, located on the corner of Patterson Drive and South Rogers Street, also meets many of the

(Cont. on page 3)

Downtown Overlay Districts

The recently adopted Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) has put in place six overlay districts within the downtown area. These overlays were developed as part of the implementation of the City's *Downtown Vision and Infill Strategy Plan*, and are designed to improve pedestrian amenities, maintain the downtown's unique sense of place, and preserve its historic structures. These overlays include changes to parking requirements (to promote alternative forms of transportation), minimal to no building setback requirements (to encourage street-forward building design), and architectural standards (to ensure that new construction is compatible with existing historic structures). The six overlay districts each have separate standards that are based upon the unique goals of each district, which are as follows:

The Courthouse Square Overlay District is designed to maintain the traditional commercial storefronts, to preserve the historic structures around the square, and to enhance pedestrian amenities. This overlay requires no parking for new developments and promotes building-forward design in order to maintain consistency with the existing downtown.

The Downtown Core Overlay District is intended to promote infill and redevelopment with densities and building heights that are slightly higher in comparison to other downtown areas. The goal is to direct growth to these areas in order to prevent sprawl at the City's edges. Development must be designed to complement the existing historic character of the area. Also, because the downtown core area is most conducive to alternative forms of transportation, parking requirements in this area are reduced and pedestrian accessibility is required.

The University Village Overlay District aims to enhance the eclectic mix of developments and architectural styles between the Courthouse Square and the University. The overlay also sets standards to maintain a pedestrian-friendly feel, and to maintain the character of Restaurant Row.

The Downtown Edges Overlay District will allow for infill and redevelopment with densities and building heights slightly higher than adjacent core residential neighborhoods in order to create a transition zone between downtown commercial and core residential areas.

The Downtown Gateway Overlay District is designed to promote architecture and site planning that reflect the transitional nature of this district as a gateway to the downtown. The district will improve pedestrian safety and create mixed-use developments that link to adjacent neighborhoods and to the downtown.

The Showers Technology Park Overlay District is intended to extend the traditional street grid and to create publicly accessible open space, which will provide convenient pedestrian and vehicular connections to the Courthouse Square. The district also aims to promote mixed-use development.

Inside Look: Jane Weiser

Jane Weiser will soon begin her 10th year with the City Planning Department. Jane has most

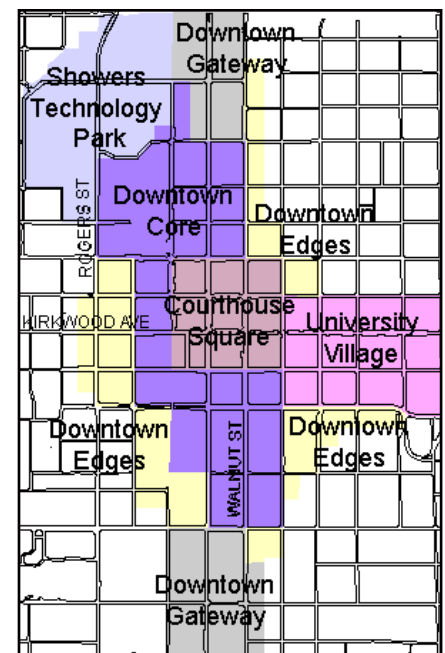


enjoyed that her position has given her the opportunity to form relationships with others in City Hall and with the community. She also enjoys the range of different daily responsibilities in her position.

As a native Bloomington resident, Jane received her B.A. in English from Indiana University, and has always been active in community projects such as the Lotus Festival and Homeward Bound.

Her daughter, Margaret, is continuing the Hoosier tradition, and will soon be a sophomore at Indiana University. Jane's son, Joey, graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design, and is currently publishing graphic novels.

UDO Downtown Overlay Districts



Construction Buzz

- 1 **Jill's House**, 751 E. Tamarack Trail, is currently under construction. The plan was approved at March Plan Commission for a temporary live-in facility with 20 rooms.
- 2 **108 E. Kirkwood Ave.**, site approved for a renovation to the historic Odd Fellows building. Upper floor is being converted to 12 residential units.
- 3 **Village at Basswood**, 2107 W. 3rd St. site plan and preliminary plat approved for a 248-unit residential apartment complex.



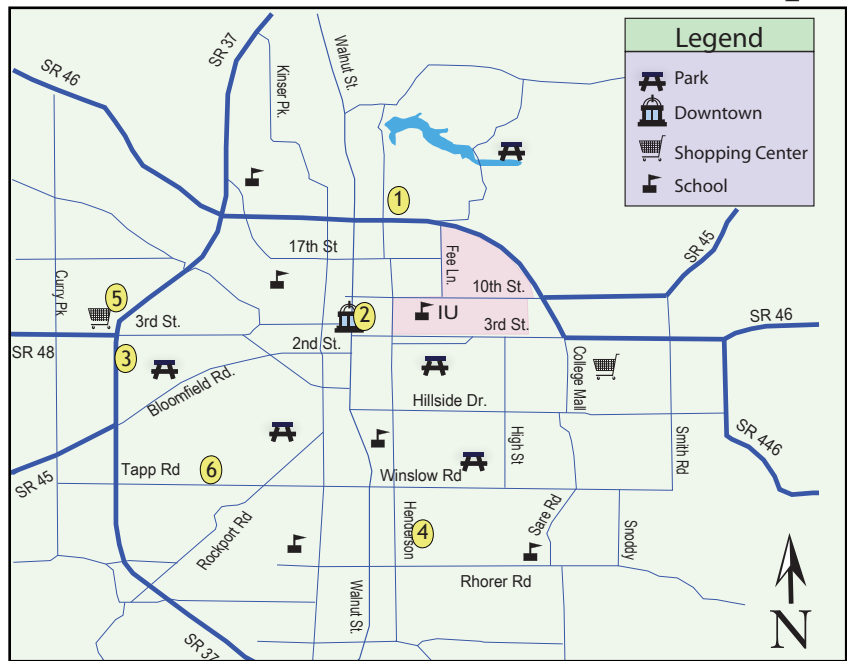
Village at Basswood Rendering

- 4 **Ivy Chase**, 3111 S. Walnut St. Pike, preliminary plat approved for a 44-lot residential subdivision on 16.16 acres.
- 5 **330 N. Jacob Dr.**, site plan approved at Whitehall Crossing for a new dental office.
- 6 **Woolery Parcel C**, 2442 S. Adams St., final plan approved for 120 units on 8.2 acres.



Woolery Parcel C Site Plan

Construction Buzz Location Map



New Urbanism *(Cont. from page 1)*

principles of new urbanist development. The building has retail on the first floor with offices above. A mix of uses such as this is a common feature of new urbanist developments. The South Dunn Street project is another example of a local new urbanist project which has a mix of residential homes, retail and office space (currently under construction on the northwest corner of Henderson Street and Hillside Drive). This development is making use of the existing neighborhood grid pattern in order to seamlessly integrate itself with the surrounding neighborhood, and therefore link to existing pedestrian amenities. All three of these sites are consistent with the new urbanism principles in that they restore the existing urban center, are designed for multiple forms of transportation, and have architecture that aims to celebrate Bloomington's local history and culture.

Although new urbanist development is sometimes associated with developments on the fringe, or even outside of downtown areas, redevelopment within the downtown can still make use of the same guiding principles of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly design, and architectural sensitivity. Two recent projects within the downtown area that have been built with new urbanist principles in mind are the Mercury Building at 7th and Morton Streets, and the 10th and College Building. Both structures have combined residential uses with commercial uses, were constructed with a building-forward design, and have architecture that is compatible with the surrounding historic buildings.

The New Urbanism movement has had a considerable impact on America's built environment. Most importantly, the movement has broadened the discussion on development practices and has brought innovative and creative approaches to urban design that every community can incorporate.

Natural Landscaping in Bloomington

Bloomington residents take great pride in beautifying their yards, and summer is a time when landscaping becomes an important hobby. Increasingly, residents are opting for natural landscaping, a landscaping concept that is designed to make yards and gardens more sustainable by drawing on ecological principles and by using plants that grow naturally in a given geographical region.

In order to assist residents who choose to use natural landscaping, the City's Environmental Planner, Linda Thompson, the City of Bloomington Environmental Commission (EC), and the Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department are all working with the public to provide information on the benefits of natural landscaping.

Linda Thompson is a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Habitat Steward who also does native landscaping in her own yard. Thompson recently gave a presentation on native landscaping to Bloomington residents as part of a training program for volunteers to become National Wildlife Habitat Stewards. Thompson discussed how to create a backyard wildlife habitat while meeting the requirements of the City

of Bloomington's ordinances.

The landscaping topics that Thompson presented are further explained in HAND's new *HANDbook*, which offers guidance on establishing a naturalized landscape without violating the City's ordinances or "aggravating your neighbors." HAND is currently taking input from the public on the document (available online at www.bloomington.in.gov/hand). Linda also worked with the EC to produce a brochure on natural landscaping which discusses the many benefits that native landscaping provides. Additional fact sheets give detailed information on designing a landscaping plan, and choosing suitable plant species (available online at www.bloomington.in.gov/clearinghouse).



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